The Cursed Water. old man who had spent his life in searching after the "philosopher's stone," by means of which one could make gold in any desired quantity, also an clixir to ward off old age and preserve eternal youth and views. In the land of Arabia once lived an

youth and vigor.

Abu Taleb, as the old man we speak of was named, lived in a capacious room with a large fire-place, and had mortars of iron and glass, pincers of various sizes, crucibles, furnaces and bellows. On long shelves were bottles and jars filled with liquids of various colors, the poisonous liquids of various colors, the poisonous drugs having a skull painted on them, and in the corner of the kitchen an old blanket was spread, on which the alchemist rested at night an hour or two, when he did not look at the stars in the blue

His house stood on the borders of a great desert, and his sister Kadijah lived with him. She was exceedingly avaricious, and therefore said one day to her-self: "My brother has his head always full of other things and hardly knows what he is eating, whether I cook delic-ious meals for him or give him only pulse to eat and water to drink." She, therefore, took twice a day, or fourteen times a week, barley flour, poured hot water over it, and added occasionally a little butter, and placed this very frugal meal on her brother's table. One day, however, when Abu Taleb thought the propitous hour arrived, and the lead in his crucible would soon be transformed into pure gold, he ate but very little of his porridge, and poured the rest into a tub, to prevent his sister from reproving him by untimely questions.

Thus the remnant was left in the tub, as the alchemist had poured it out, and gradually began to spread an odor. The sensitive nose of Abu Taleb soon perceived the spirit in it, and he did not rest until he had separated it from the husks and poured it in a bottle. When he tasted it he found that it circulated through his veins like fire, and made him believe that he had indeed found the water of life. No wonder that he concluded to make the most of it. He, therefore, ate from that time but one-third of his porridge, just enough to keep him from starving, and poured the rest in his tub, in order to obain more and more of his precious wa-

Meanwhile a great famine came over the land, and a half-starved little boy, 2,000 BUSHELS CORN. whose parents had already died, ap-proached the window to beg for food left on the table, but Abu Taleb poured it rather into his tub and chased the poor starving orphan from his threshold, till he lost his way in the desert and laid down under a shrub to die.

Then the guardian angel of the child approached, with tears in his eyes, the throne of God and accused Abi Taleb of having caused the death of the orphan. And the Lord said to the ministering angel, "Hasten down and curse the beverage which Abu Teleb prepares of bar-ley and water, and all which will be henceforth prepared. Curse them even to the ends of the earth."

over his grave, that he might sleep se-curely untouched by the wild beasts of desert. Then he entered the labratory of the alchemist, stepped near the bottle which contained the liquid, and said, "Cursed be thou! Those who drink of thee shall think they are taking healing dictne, but thou shalt prove a poiso unto them. Those who use thee shall mean to derive strength from thee, but thou shalt be unto them like water poured into a blazing coal fire, which does LIVERY, not extinguish it, but increases its heat: thou shalt consume their strength as vinegar destroys steel. Thou shalt weaken the body of man and wrap his soul into utter darkness. Those who drink of thee thou shalt bind with stronger fetters than tyrants do their slaves and when thy friends curse thee at the dawn of day, and cry and sigh over their misery, they shall not be able to do without thee and with trembling hands

Thou shalt appear as harmless as the waters which sparkle in the spring and shalt nevertheless destroy whole nations and cause them to vanish away, like the shadow when it declineth. Satan has many snares, thou shalt be his greatest, and he shall welcome thee as his ally. Curse be thou! cured henceforth unto be end of time.

Thus spake the angel of the Lord, and returned whence he had come.

After this Abu Taleb died, and being guilty of the death of the orphant child burdened with the great weight of his sin, sank down to the lowest part of the earth, like a millstone which has een cast into tho sea.

Not one little starving shild, but many, many have been slain with hunger, while the sweetest wholesome grain of the field which should have been fed them, has been turned into the curse

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